

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

DATE DISTR. 30 April 1962

SUBJECT Reactions to the Pre-Christmas Demonstrations
and Rudolf Slansky's Arrest

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1. The government decision not to grant Christmas bonuses in 1961 to those employees whose monthly income exceeded approximately 3,500.- Kcs caused extreme dissatisfaction among the workers and resulted in angry public protests. Demonstrations took place in the Ostrava region (P50/ O 59) and in Ceske Budejovice (049/ Q 96), where employees of the Kohinoor enterprise staged a strike. The largest demonstration took place in Brno, where approximately 25,000 workers participated. Action against the demonstrators was taken by the workers' militia, the SNB, and some military units from the Brno garrison. The use of these military units to suppress the demonstrators was probably unauthorized because a few days after the incident, a Ministry of National Defense decree was published in the daily bulletin of the Infantry Institute at Lipnik nad Bečvou (P50/ O 14) stating that military assistance in a case other than of natural disaster could be invoked only by order of higher headquarters. Military intervention in the Brno demonstration damaged the highly praised cooperation between the Czechoslovak Army and the workers.
2. There was no mention of these incidents in the Czechoslovak press or on radio broadcasts. A few days later, however, brief announcements were made in the press and on the radio that the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Rudolf Slansky, had been arrested for espionage activity. Both events created a certain amount of depression and nervousness among Party members. The leading Communist officials at the Infantry Institute were called, one by one, to the Department of Political Affairs (Hlavní politická správa) in Prague where, most probably, they received instructions as to how they should minimize the effects of both events, explain to staff personnel why Slansky had been arrested, and explain the recent demonstrations.
3. Early in December Communist Party members and candidates were assembled at the Institute for a confidential meeting. The Slansky affair was explained by Major (fm) Vojnar, the commanding officer's deputy for political affairs, who stated briefly that Slansky had

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been arrested because he was guilty of espionage and of activities connected with Sling, Reicin and Kopolt. He stated that increased vigilance was necessary by each Party member to help unveil other such traitors and spies as Slansky. Those present were admonished to believe only in the Communist Party headed by Klement Gottwald and in the alliance with the Soviet Union. Vojnar's speech duplicated statements made after the arrest of important officials in the past.

4. The political instructor of the Infantry Institute, Captain (fnu) Vacek, presented the explanation for the pre-Christmas demonstrations at the meeting. He stated that the demonstration in Brno had proved that the workers had not yet reached a sufficiently high level of political enlightenment and, therefore, did not understand measures taken by the government. He added that even the Communist leaders in the various industrial enterprises had not as yet reached this level and, consequently, often fell under the influence of reactionaries and saboteurs. He explained that it would be necessary to make radical changes in the management of enterprises in order to prevent similar occurrences. The officers present were then instructed to take advantage of every contact with the workers and the public to explain to them that the reason for the limited supply of goods available in the shops was the need of the government first to build up reserves from which to equip the Army for the war that the capitalists constantly threaten to precipitate.

25X1A5. [redacted] similar explanations were made throughout the country.

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